

# FOREWORD

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The present issue of the "Records" contains accounts of the first stages of regeneration of the flora and fauna of Three Kings Islands following extermination of the goats thereon two years ago.

During the sixty years since their introduction, goats have almost completely changed the nature of the plant covering of Great Island; and, had there not been among the native trees one that withstood their depredations, the island would have suffered the same reduction to bareness and aridity as St. Helena experienced over a century ago.

The few Maori occupants who left Great Island in 1840 may have left animals on the island; we do not know. The only record we have is that goats were introduced in 1889. Fortunately we have two records of the then state of the vegetation, both by Mr. T. F. Cheeseman, Curator of the Auckland Museum.

Occasional visitors since that time have referred to the increasing goat population, but it was not until the Museum's "Will Watch" expedition of 1934 that the extent of the damage being done to the vegetation was realised, while the rapid spread of destruction observed by the "Arbutus" Expedition of 1945 emphasized the parlous plight of the native vegetation.

Mr. Powell, a member of this expedition and at that time Acting-Director of the Museum, reported the conditions, and the urgent need to destroy the goats, to the Government, with the prompt result that the Department of Internal Affairs during the next summer sent its Wild Life section marksmen to the island and within three weeks the goats were exterminated.

Cheeseman's descriptions of the original vegetation in 1887 and 1889, and the Museum expeditions' records of its conditions in 1934, 1945 and 1946, now provide the basis for studies in natural regeneration on the island. As will be seen from the present reports the change is already most marked, not to say dramatic.

It is hoped to make frequent visits to the islands (the difficult landing conditions will hardly permit of their being regular), whereby the present studies will be followed by detailed descriptions of the progress of regeneration and of the phases through which it may pass.

Only the larger islands of the group are named, and, as it is intended to venture every possible landing to examine the unmodified flora and fauna of the small islands, it becomes necessary to give names by which they can be identified. In offering these new names on the accompanying map, Mr. Powell and Mr. Turbott follow the pleasant tradition of commemorating the adventuring vessels.

It is a pleasure to thank the Royal New Zealand Navy, the Government Departments, and the enterprising and intrepid yachtsmen and launch owners who have made the past visits possible; it is also a pleasure to know that we are assured of their future co-operation and assistance in an interesting and, we venture, a not unimportant investigation.

GILBERT ARCHER,  
Director.

# THREE KINGS ISLANDS



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